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BINNS, Henry Bryan,
The wanderer, and other
poems.

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The Wanderer
and other Poems
Henry Bryan Binns

London: A.C. Fifield
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The Wanderer
& Other Poems

By the Same Writer.

The Great Companions. 1908.

A Life of Walt Whitman. 1905.

Abraham Lincoln. 1907.

In Preparation.

The Adventure : a Play.

The Wanderer
and other Poems
Henry Bryan Binns
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With a photograv-
ure after Botticelli

London : 1910
A. C. Fifield
13 Clifford's Inn

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Contents

	PAGE
Is it Knowledge that Wakens Song?	7
Wind and Rain	8
An Apollo at the Vatican	9
The Building of the City	10
The Spanish Gipsy	12
Deeming Dale	14
An Old Woman	15
The Coppice Wood	16
The Wanderer	17
November	24
The Sea-Change	25
The Mirrors	26
The Wind in the Door	27
Doubt	28
Advent	29
At Nightfall	30
For Two Pictures	31
Lucifer Triumphant	32

NOTE.—*The Wanderer* was first printed in *The Albany Review*; a few of the poems made a first appearance in *The Academy*, *The New Age*, and other periodicals, and I thank the editors for allowing me to republish them. I have reprinted three from an earlier volume (now out of print) which was accredited to "Richard Askham." Mr. Rutland Boughton has written choral music for *The Building of the City*.

Is it Knowledge that Wakens Song ?

*I*S it knowledge that wakens Song,
Or wisdom bred of the Past?—
Though her eyes are eagle-strong,
And her flying eagle-vast,
Is it knowledge that wakens Song,
Or wisdom out of the Past?

*Nay, but Thou that hast wings,
Thou that hast eyes for far,
Spirit of Living Things
Who singest and lo, they are—
Nay, it is Thou hast wings,
Thou that hast eyes for far !*

Wind and Rain

Written during a storm in the Jura

WHO would not ride on the Shadowy Plain
Horsed with the Host of the galloping Rain?
Ride, ride
Over the wide
Leagues of the forest, the corn-land, the meadows,
Blotting together the lights and the shadows?
With the wind, the wind in his heart, in his brain,
Who would not ride?

Into the dark that is black, that is blind,
Sped by the tempest that thunders behind—
(Hark, hark!
Loud through the dark
Roaring, he urges us into the denser
Thick of the pines where the night is intenser!)
With the Rain, the Rain on the galloping Wind
Who would not ride?

An Apollo at the Vatican

I SAW the eagle joy of things
A captive, drooping down his wings,
While his dawn-enkindled eyes
Sickened for forgotten skies.

I felt the godlike heart of man—
Ceasing from its stellar span—
Draw instead a broken breath
And resign itself to death.

Strode of a sudden, summer-bright
As a towering cloud of light,
Through that drear imprisonment,
Apollo, playing as he went.

He is Manhood, setting forth
With his face toward the north,
With his radiant head on high,
And his feet upon the sky,

Mirth of morning for his mien ;
While the exultant strings, between
His divine young fingers, play
The beginning of the Day.

The Wanderer

The Building of the City

I SEE a City being wrought
Upon the rock of Living Thought.
It was a bloodless dream until
It quickened in a good man's will,
Became a hope, became a vow,
For one, for many, until now
Upon the rock of Living Thought
I see the City being wrought.
City of Thought, City of Dream,
Standing beside the ancient stream
Of Progress, all thy fields are free
To the wide winds of Liberty !
Builded thou art, but yet forever
We build thee with our heart's endeavour
Upon the border of that Stream
Beautiful City of our Dream !
Colour and music, fancy, song,
To our enduring toil belong :
Naught shall be wanting that can free
Our spirit : there shall ever be
Goblets of laughter at the lip
Of this exultant fellowship,
Because our hands together frame
A City unbedimmed by shame.
Foursquare our City, taking all
The winds with heart heroical :
Ay, blow or buffet, groan or gride,
She takes them, for she is the bride
Of a free people who have sold
No liberty of hers for gold,
Nor for poor prudence did transgress
The pure love of her loveliness.

The Building of the City

I I

She is our faith ! How like a star
Mocking the dark she shines afar !
Our light, she writes upon the wall
Of darkness challenges to all
The drear and dread and doleful powers,
That they release the golden hours
They squander, and give back again
The glory of the day to men.

To every citadel of wrong
Her stones cry out a battle-song :
She is so wrought of manly stuff
The nations have not power enough
To silence her : her heart is free
From any fear of any : She
Can take the world's assaulting shock
Builded so on the Living Rock.

I see the City being wrought
Upon the rock of Living Thought :
Upon her rising walls I look,
And every stone is like a book
Of many milk-white pages, fair
Imprinted, with a loving care ;
While on each lovely page is set
Word of a wisdom lovelier yet.

City of Thought, City of Dream,
Standing beside the cosmic stream
Of Progress, all thy fields are free
To the wide winds of Liberty !
Builded thou art, but yet forever
We build thee with our heart's endeavour,
Upon the borders of that Stream,
Beautiful City of our Dream !

The Spanish Gipsy : Suggested by Ignacio
Zuloaga's *Lucienne Breal*.

AS the night fell, I found her on the hills.
Great-shouldered she—with one hand on her hip,
Her chin upon the other hand—her gaze
Sibylline. When I came into her gaze
Still had it been as though I stood afar,
So far she shot her sight ; but that its shaft—
How far soe'er across the hills it flew—
Was fire-tipped, to burn inward, suddenly.

A gold snake circled round her swart forearm :
Upon her fingers gleamed the night-dark stone :
Deep down upon her brow the forest-dark
Of her tumultuous hair hung heavily ;
And thereunder, but darklier, for there pulsed
Her living blood within it, shone her gaze.
Her heart stood watching at its open port :
The night fell on the hills : she drew the night
In and about her : she was one with it.
Mystical was her mouth, as Freedom's mouth
Whose lips awake the morning from his sleep
With clarion call : her dread and silent face
More silent than the hills, because it was
Yet mightier than they, yet mightier
Than the last mountain, merging in the night.

The Spanish Gipsy

13

Bred of the mountain night and dread with power,
Prophetic, masterful, indifferent,
The daughter of the Night, and doorkeeper
Of that yet unimaginable Day
That every night, descending on the land,
Presages, and that every evening sees
Waiting at droop of dusk upon the hills,—
As darkness fell upon the hills, I met
The challenge of the Gipsy-woman's gaze.

Deeming Dale

WHO is it knocks at my window? Ho,
Who is it rides the gale?

“Yonder the Pitiless Ladies go
Adown the Deeming Dale:

“The cold of a cloud is over them,
Open the pane and see;
All the women of perilous dream
Go drifting drearily,

“One by one on the bitter wind
Companionless and grey,
With the empty sound of a host behind
To bring them on their way.

“But yonder, yonder comes the Moon,
And yonder see them turn:
Jewelled and fierce their hunting shoon
Fly flashing through the fern.”

Now whither do they ride so fast
Upon the whirling wind?

“Fasten the pane against the blast!
Hasten and draw the blind.”

Who is it knocks at my window? Ho,
Who is it rides the gale?

“And who would join the hosts that go
Adown the Deeming Dale?”

An Old Woman

UPON my hills, upon my heart
The purple evening shadows lie,
My thoughts leap like the olive sprays
That shimmer up against the sky.

About me blows the floweriness
Of summer and the young green corn ;
And in my heart dances a sheen
Of dark and silver, night and morn.

O, like an olive, old am I,
Fantastic, thwarted, whimsical ;
But then my thoughts are olive sprays,
Lissom, and mystical, and tall.

Gnarly and grey and old I am,
As Mother Earth, Great-mother Night ;
And up against the blue I dance,
Lilac and silver in the light.

The Coppice Wood

WHO is it haunts the coppice wood—
Draws the thicket like a hood
Primrose-broidered round her face—
Sudden through the hazel boughs
Glances her bewildering grace?
Who is it haunts the coppice wood?

Who is it haunts the coppice wood?
Wonder wakens in my blood;
For her sake the song is fain
That among the hazel boughs
All the birds begin again.
Who is it coming through the wood?

I saw the Maiden where she stood
Ankle deep amid the flood
Of the cuckoo blossom; all
About her, through the hazel boughs,
Rang the call and counter-call—
“Who is it coming through the wood?”
“May Morning in the coppice wood!”





The Wanderer : Being Words for
Botticelli's Voyage of Venus

An Earth Spirit, watching :

WHAT car is this ye blow ?
And what is this white Blossom of the cool grey
Sea

That worshipping ye hasten Her, and throw
Flowers after Her in glee ?
And wherefore is She inwardly so bright
That, all and every whit,
Her body with delight
Illumined is, and like a pearl is it ?

And tell me, tell me, wherefore are Her eyes
Purposeful, infinite,
Transcending any thought,
As though unto the Sea the streams had brought,
From the mountains where they rise,
High ultimate passion
Of tempest and of stress,
Out of its wonder, in the deeps, to fashion
This loveliness ?

The West Wind :

Blessèd, blessèd, are we,
Children of the South and of the West,

Whose blithe young windy faces
Follow Her through the morning spaces
Of the quiet Sea !
Of all things She is loveliest :
And we, we blow
Her bark where She would go !

The South Wind :

Softly we blow !
She is most pale and rare—
Venus, the daughter of the Sea—
And we have roses, and strow
Them, that there be
A richness in the air :
Laughing, we blow
The long, long tresses of Her languorous hair !

To Her body pale
She doth catch them with Her hand
As we blow them :
With the dawn-gleam in and thro' them
They become Her golden sail
And bear Her to the land !

West Wind :

Wistful, She enters the ripples and the foam
That keep the shore :
Ocean is Her home—
As a stranger
Stands She at your door.

Wistful, She comes, as one that bringeth danger,
Once the sea is left behind,
To whosoe'er shall meet Her :
She seeks if She may go unseen :
And see, breasting our merry wind,
Come ye to greet Her,
And bring a flowered robe meet for our Queen !

Earth Spirit, offering the Robe :

How it is vain !
Those feet, where'er they pass,
To sweet rebellious pain
Must wake the ungovernable grass .
Out of this very robe the air shall learn
Proud and implacable insurgencies
To whisper to the unforgetting trees !
And wheresoe'er She glances,
Stern, without ruth,
On errands far, and never to return,
Her eyes will bid the adventurous heart of youth !

Sung in the Grove :

Needs must we pause amid our maiden dances :
Across their calm control
Wakes the new gladness
That begins to stir
Confusedly within our Soul :
Some passion of Immortal Madness
Shaking its sleep away to welcome Her !
Ah, we delay,
Attendant on the pleasure

Of this tall Stranger, that ye blow
 Hither across the Sea :
 Amid our play,
 Her ocean-stepping feet bring in a measure
 Of world-perplexity :

Yea, yea !
 For She whose bark ye bring,
 Cometh to carry away,
 Upon some wayward rhythm of wandering,
 Our ancient treasure,
 The old sweet steps we know,
 That flow together, and flow
 In the stately dances of virginity.

Earth Spirit :

Ah, whither, whither, whither,
 White Bird that wendest hither,
 White Dove across the Sea ?

*Venus answers nothing, always looking wistfully before
 Her.*

Earth Spirit, aside :

As in a dream,
 Moving She doth not move :
 The ages stream
 By Her—She stems their tide
 Poised on a shell—doth prove
 Their murmuring flow, and silent doth abide.

South Wind :

Maiden,
Ask Her not whither !
About Her feet
Invisibly,
Her little bark is laden
With mystery,
With all that is not born
And is to be.

West Wind :

From far beyond the Past,
By paths untried,
With empty hands, as one forlorn,
Mere jetsam of the wanton tide,
Naked, and carried on a shell, at last
She is come hither,—She,
Immortal Wanderer through Time, Child of Eternity !

Sung in the Grove :

Are Thy feet wandering feet ?
Are Thy hands vain ?
Heavy Thy flight—
Burdened with bitter-sweet
Of night and day,
Promise obscure of pain
And ever-incomplete
Delight ?
Snatchest Thou hence for aye
Peace from our silences,
Shadowy blossoming ?

Plantest Thou fierce and bright
 Wonders instead of peace?—
 Thou comest, and—
 Whatso Thou bring,
 Whatso Thou take away,—
 We reckon not anything
 So Thou but stay!

West Wind :

 Fair
 Though ye greet Her, yet in vain your prayer!
 Her feet that are the New Life's Messengers
 Know not delaying.
 Whenas our singing stirs
 About Her head,
 Through the long strands of Her hair,
 Those idle fingers, playing,
 In every golden thread
 Catch a sure murmuring
 Of voices far away,
 Bidding Her feet depart!

South Wind :

 Together, when we snatch Her robe, and blow
 Her body clean of care,
 Fragrance of orchard blossoming
 Fulfils Her, She is all
 Odour and murmur and desire of Spring.

Then wandering grows fair,
 With eagerness, Her heart
 Making reply,

She hears the unvisited,
The untrodden islands call,
And She forgets to stay.

Voyager, She, Her errand still achieving ;
She lingers whiles She may,
With mystic fingers and that golden thread
The enkindling wonder weaving,
Her fabric of far vision, floating, to lie outspread
Luminous, over all the earth and sky.

West Wind :

Sure as ye think to hold Her, so
Certain your undeceiving !
Some dawn or evening from the hills
Down to Her scallop, unobserved She'll go :
Our breezes begin stirring, and below
Her feet the ripple trills :
Ye call : She doth not answer : She is sped.

The Winds, together :

Laughing, we blow
Her bark where it would go !

November

FAR inland, and a sky
Like a sea-rippled strand,
With cold pale pools left by the far-spent tide—
A limpid east-wind blowing.

Marching against the sky, horses and men,
A team goes, sowing in the corn
Into the gleaming many-furrowed field,
The harrows dragging after.

And the Earth gladdens quietly in the clean cold light
As one that bathes at a salt pool on the strand
And hears the sea afar—the old, wild sea—
The haunting of the sea along the margin.

The Sea-Change

IF when I yield my spirit to the Sea,
When the still silent tide of Death receives me,
I shall depart out of this life of forms
Whose *Here* is but a point, whose *Now* is but a moment,
Whose *Me* is but a sense-constricted soul,—
If I depart, giving myself up wholly
To the receiving waters infinite,
Surely my spirit shall therein discover
New and unmeasured being.

I will take such a body as the Light has,
Or Music—ay, or other finer Force
That runs unhindered through the fields of Space—
I will exchange this *Here*, this *Now*, this *Me*,
For other, vaster ; that I may pass out
By open doors into the open air,
And be at large with God.

Even now, whenso I love,
Whenso my narrowed *Me* eludes its bonds
And, reaching out and over, loosens, loses
Itself to *Life*—even now, whenso I love,
Surely there leaps beneath my heart the Immortal
That shall go out into the Deeps with God.

The Mirrors

THOU lookest in this mirror that displays
A face, a form that answers thee and says
"Behold thyself," and thou believest it :
But when some other comes to thee and cries
"Behold thyself ! " thou thinkest thyself wise
Denying, O thou man of little wit !

Art thou this thing of mouth and nose and eyes
This vested presence that upon thee cries
With too familiar greeting from the glass ?
I thought thee something nobler, for I heard
The woodland call thee with its leafy word
The field with its innumerable grass.

This bald five feet or more, is't all thou art ?
Or is it haply but a little part,
Whereof thou know'st not the mysterious Whole :
Whereof there is no thing but whispers thee
"Behold thyself " : whereof the stars and sea,
Future and Past are mirrors to thy Soul ?

Wind in the Door

SHRIEKS the wild wind i' the bolted door—
That treacherous wind !
But listen, unconfined,
He is all mirth across the open moor.

Haunted, confused with pent-up sound,
This barren shell ;
But plain each syllable
Of all the shouting waves beyond its bound.

And so shrieks Fate i' the soul confined—
Ah, treacherous Fate !
The heart emancipate
Hears her all laughter like the moorland wind.

And so, confused as in a shell
The pent-up sound,
Goes thought, till all around
He feels the Ocean, and breaks through the spell.

Doubt

MY mind is full of twisted ways,
Of passages that wind about,
And, turning, hide them from the blaze
Of light that fills the world without.

In these recesses of my brain,
Beyond the range of sun or star,
Harbour darkness, doubt and pain :
Light cannot reach them where they are,

Unless, long-beating like a flood,
It burst the barriers of my will,
Enter the channels of my blood,
And with its life my life fulfil.

Then, then before it Doubt would die
Out of its crannies, and be done ;
Thought would forget uncertainty,
And find the glory of the sun.

Advent

I WAITED : he is come. Oh, I have dreamed
Of him and doubted ; now I understand,—
In all the day it was his glory gleamed,
In all the darkness I have touched his hand.

'Tis the new life beginning ; now I see
This cell is grown too small to hold me : I
Am driven out by joy's necessity,
For if I were to linger, joy must die.

So I must out and on. Fling the door wide,
Good Porter, whether thou be life or death !
These narrow walls are not for me ; outside
The whole world breathes the wonder of his breath.

At Nightfall

NOW let the thoughts of Time go by—
Needs of the body and the mind ;—
The busy sun is lost behind
The hills, and all the meadows lie
Under the eternal sky.

Now banish fancy, thought and care—
Into their woods bid them begone ;
Their busy day is out and done :
For silence now must thou prepare
Breathing the immortal air.

Thy cares go, giving thee release
Into the silence of the night,
While star and star across the height
Measure the spaces of thy peace
When thy cares go by and cease.

But when thy heart is free from stain,
Washed as in waters infinite
From every care that clouded it,
With the morning thou wilt fain
Take the thoughts of time again.

For Two Pictures by Mary MacRae White

I. The Clearing.

CLEAR me a little space among the trees,
April will brim it up with primroses.
Nay, as with ruthless axe you pluck adown
This coppice, silver-grey and purple-brown,
Ere yet the January sun hath found
Time to evoke a new leaf from the ground,
Even already then, your clearing fills
With blossom delicate as the blue hills
And sweet as the wild wisdom that distils
Among the old leaves sodden in the mire,—
—The wayward smoke of the woodcutter's fire.

II. The Gipsy's Looking-Glass.

For you, it is a pool among the trees
That you could scoop (almost) between your hands,
A little black pool, bordered with green grass :
But some who look upon it as they pass,
And how it opens inward and expands
Wizardly,—cross themselves : for unto these
It hath a magic mightier than the sea's,
Old witchcrafts manier than the moonlit sands,
And it is called " The Gipsy's Looking-Glass."

Lucifer Triumphant : Suggested by
William Blake's Picture

UPON the dust her loveliness is spread—
Eve's yellow hair : her foolish fingers rest
Upon the fruit forbid her : on her breast,
Crushing its petals, lolls the cunning head,
And, loop on scaly loop, obscene and dread
Locking her, gloating over her, possessed
Of her, the whole black serpent. With what zest
He feels the flame lap-lapping, hot and red !

She faints : while, stretched above her and the snake,
Potent to save, and slay that shameful thing,
Saving her not, but (for the hidden sake
Of some wild hope that is not yet awake)
Enduring with her, waits on weariless wing
Lucifer, Son of the Morning, triumphing !

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